

REMARKS

The Examiner's attention to the present application is noted with appreciation.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-8. Claims 1-3, and 6-7 are currently pending. Claims 4-5 and 8 are canceled. Claim 1 is currently amended. No new matter has been added.

I. Objection to claims 1 and 4

In the second paragraph of page 2, the Examiner objects to claims 1 and 4 for informalities. The Examiner's suggested modification of claim 1 is incorporated. Claim 4 is canceled.

II. Rejection of claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 paragraph 1

Claim 4 is rejected for failing to comply with the enablement requirement. Claim 4 is canceled thereby making this rejection moot.

III. Rejection of claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-8 are rejected as obvious in view of US-2,493,503 to Renne and US-4,563,796 to Kettlestrings. That rejection is traversed. To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness there must be some suggestion or motivation to combine reference teachings. There is no suggestion or motivation to combine the teachings of Kettlestrings with Renne because to make the combination would render Renne unsatisfactory for its intended purpose.

The Examiner states that Renne does not teach a thickening on one of the parallel elements, but that Kettlestrings, at Figure 2, teaches a thickening/spring element 32 at the end of element 22 that faces element 28. The Examiner further states that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the device of Renne to include a thickening/spring element at the end of element 14 because one would have been motivated to provide a means for gripping thin objects located between the first and second elements as taught by Kettlestrings. Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's analysis for the following reason.

The clothespin device disclosed in Renne is designed to accept a clothesline easily through the opening passage of the clothespin to a position distal to the opening and not to grip thin objects passing through the opening between the first and second elements. The device of Kettlestrings teaches a clamp designed to grip thin objects passing between the opening formed between the first element 28 and the

second element 22 (see figure 2 of Kettlestrings) through the use of a thickening/spring element at the mouth of the passage between the first and second element. To that end, combining Renne with Kettlestrings would render Renne unsatisfactory for its intended purpose.

Renne expressly states that the "lower end of clamp 14 is extended beyond the lower end of inner clamp 18 and is curved outwardly to present a tapering passage 22 which facilitates and guides the entry of clothesline 24 between the clamp members." (Col. 2, ll. 7-12). Figure 3 of Renne illustrates the clothespin is designed to hold the clothesline at a position distal to the opening of passage 22. Modifying the terminal portion of 14 (see figure 4 of Renne) with the thickening/spring element 32 of Kettlestrings clamp (see figure 2 of Kettlestrings) would interfere with facilitating the entry of a clothesline into passage 22 (see Figure 1 of Renne). In operation, a thickening/spring element positioned at the mouth of passage 22 as taught by Kettlestrings would narrow the passage leading to the distal portion of the clothespin where the clothesline resides without providing any benefit to the operation of the clothespin.

In addition, Kettlestrings illustrates that a second element 22 is bent towards the innermost element 28 thereby creating a narrow passage between element 28 and element 22 for the purpose of wedging an article between the thickening portion of element 22 and element 28. The Examiner's own statement (page 4, paragraph 1 of the January 12, 2005 Office Action) acknowledges that Kettlestrings' device grips thin objects between the first and second elements of the clamp even at the opening passage. In contrast, the device of Renne provides an outer most element that is bent away from the innermost element thereby creating a tapered passage between clamps 14 and 18 being wider at the mouth of the passage and narrower at the distal end to facilitate the easy passage of a clothesline into the clothespin.

In light of the problem solved by the clothespin in Renne (facilitate and guide entry of the clothesline past the mouth of the clothespin passage), one of ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to combine the inwardly bent thickening/spring element for clamping an object located at the passage opening as taught by Kettlestrings (Fig. 2) with the device of Renne because to do so would render Renne unsatisfactory for its intended purpose. Since there is no motivation to combine the references of Renne with Kettlestrings, there is no *prima facie* case of obviousness for claims 1-3 and 6-7. Therefore, claims 1-3, and 6-7 are patentable.

Applicant has amended claim 1 to further clarify the invention. Claims 4-5 and 8 are canceled.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all grounds of rejection and objection have been avoided and/or traversed. It is believed that the case is now in condition for allowance and same is respectfully requested.

If any issues remain, or if the Examiner believes that prosecution of this application might be expedited by discussion of the issues, the Examiner is cordially invited to telephone the undersigned attorney for Applicant at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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